

The request for continued examination and rule 1.132 affidavit received 8/19/09 have been made of record. Claims 1-7, 9 and 11-15 are pending.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Botros.

Botros discloses grafted polyolefin polymers suitable for admixture with ungrafted polypropylene and copolymers of propylene and minor amounts of ethylene (column 6, lines 9-12). The grafted products are taught as functioning as coupling agents when mixed with polypropylene filled with wood and flour (column 6, lines 47-52). These filler materials are seen as meeting the instant limitations to natural fiber. The molecular weight distribution of the grafted product is specified as less than 7 (claim 1) and the amount of grafted maleic anhydride is specified in claim 5.

Applicants' limitation to consisting essentially of grafted polypropylene is not seen as patentably distinguishing over the prior art (see below).

Claims 4 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Botros in view of Godavarti et al and Castagna et al.

Botros has been discussed previously. Botros lacks an explicit teaching of amounts of wood to be incorporated and the use of a fatty acid ester lubricant.

Godavarti et al teach the use of 50-75% wood fiber in similar polypropylene/grafted polypropylene compositions.

Castagna et teaches the use of fatty acid esters as lubricant in similar graft modified polypropylene. Wood fiber compositions.

The rule 1.132 affidavit of Dr. Sigforth is not persuasive. The data presented therein appears to compare the instant invention to compositions containing a terpolymer not disclosed by the prior art. The examiner notes that the grafted copolymer of the prior art is a propylene ethylene copolymer described in detail in Example 1 of the reference. Applicants need demonstrate patentably distinct properties over the compositions disclosed by the prior art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Edward J. Cain whose telephone number is (571) 272-1118. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 10:00-6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu can be reached on (571) 272-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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